

REVEALING RESEARCH & EVALUATION (RREV)

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This issue highlights recent work from the Somers Research Group focusing on
 Mentally Ill Offenders and High Frequency Offenders

A 2015 study conducted by the Somers Research Group at Simon Fraser University, entitled ***Mentally Ill Offenders: The Intersections of Public Health and Public Safety*** has found that 60% of individuals under BC Corrections supervision have been diagnosed with a mental health and/or substance use disorder.

The research group analyzed a sample of offenders (n = 88, 898) over a five-year period from April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2012.

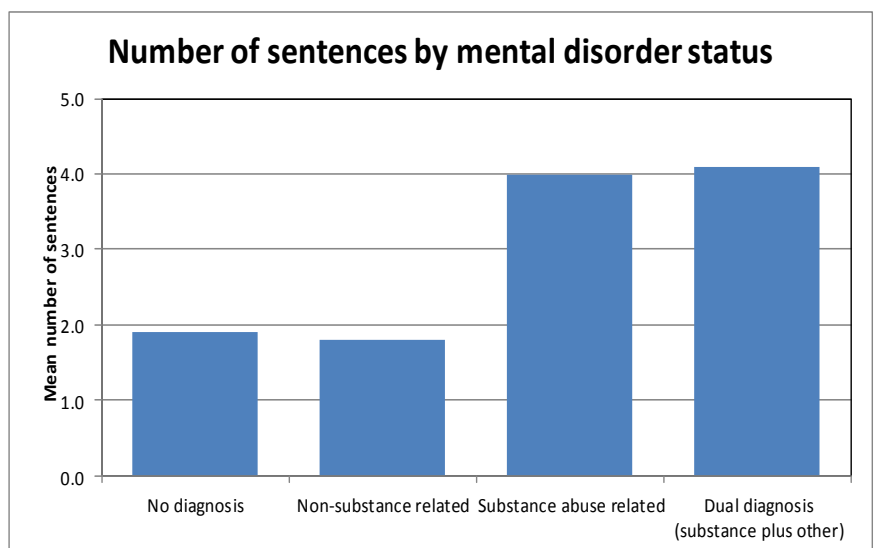
The analysis used four categories: no mental illness; non-substance abuse related mental illness; only substance abuse related mental illness; and dual diagnosis (both non-substance abuse and substance abuse related mental illness). The study looked at the rates of diagnoses across all BC health authorities.

Client Gender

Female clients, 18% of the study population (16,147 women), were substantially (79%) more likely than male clients to have a psychiatric diagnosis. Female clients were more likely to have non-substance related diagnoses and dual diagnoses than males.



Substance use (alone or in combination with other mental disorders) is overwhelmingly relevant to correctional involvement.



Above: Clients and inmates with a substance abuse related or dual diagnosis have more than **double the number of convictions** than those without a substance abuse diagnosis.

Below: Clients with a substance abuse related or dual diagnosis also have the **highest number of custody days** and **serve longer community sentences**, on average.

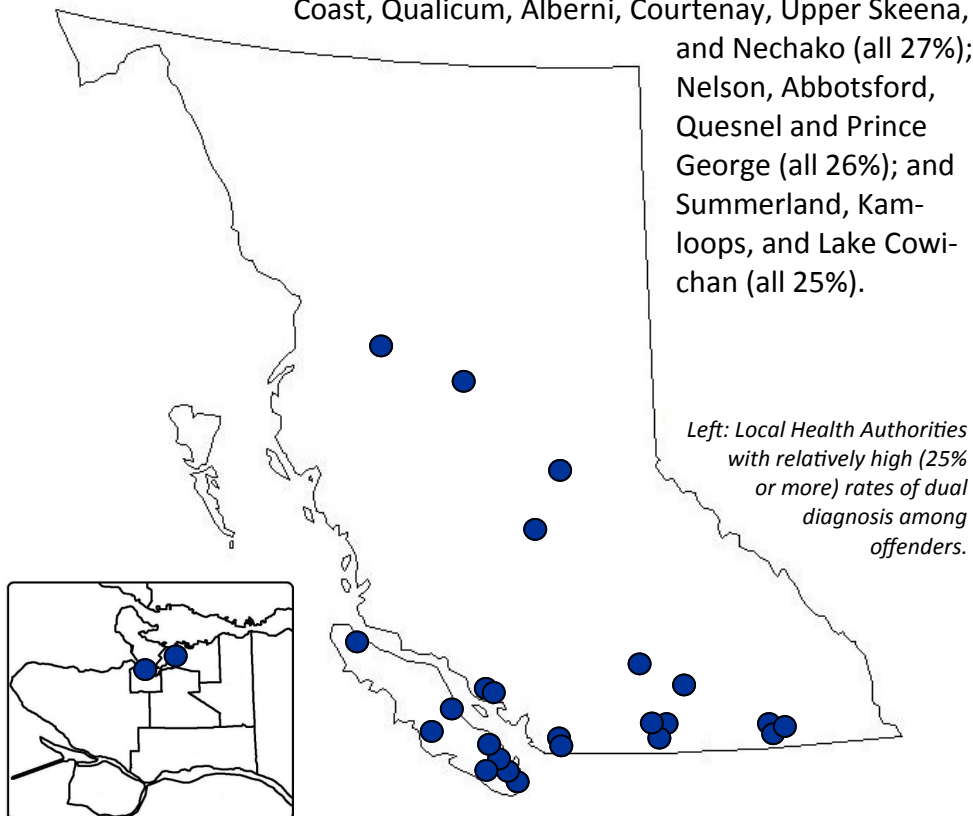
| | Days in Custody | Community Supervision Days |
|--|-----------------|----------------------------|
| No diagnosis | 34.8 | 279.9 |
| Non-substance related | 28.3 | 308.9 |
| Substance abuse related | 81 | 382.2 |
| Dual diagnosis (substance plus other) | 70.4 | 401.2 |

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Geography of Dual Diagnosis

In nearly every Local Health Authority (LHA) **the majority of offenders had a mental illness**. The highest overall rate was in Vancouver for individuals with no fixed address (77%). Nearly half (48%) of these offenders had a dual diagnosis.

The rate of **dual diagnosis** was also relatively high (above 30%) in the following LHAs: Downtown Eastside (42%); Powell River (37%); Vancouver Island North (33%); Vernon (31%); Campbell River and Greater Victoria (both 30%). The following LHAs had rates of dual diagnosis between 25% & 29%: Castlegar, Penticton, Cowichan and Nanaimo (all 29%); Trail and Vancouver City Centre (both 28%); Keremeos, Mission, Sunshine Coast, Qualicum, Alberni, Courtenay, Upper Skeena, and Nechako (all 27%); Nelson, Abbotsford, Quesnel and Prince George (all 26%); and Summerland, Kamloops, and Lake Cowichan (all 25%).



Risk Rating

Clients and inmates with a substance abuse diagnosis (alone or with another diagnosis) are **more likely to receive a high risk rating** on the CRNA. Of the 50,868 offenders for whom a CRNA rating was available, **29%** of those with a substance abuse related mental disorder and **32%** of those with a dual diagnosis received “High” ratings, compared to **13%** of those with no mental disorder and **12%** of those with non-substance abuse related disorder only.

“Therapeutic and rehabilitative practices should focus on addressing substance-related problems among people who have additional mental disorders.”

- from “Mentally Ill Offenders: The Intersection of Public Health and Public Safety” (2015)

Did You Know...

Compared to those with no mental health diagnosis:

Clients and inmates with **any type of mental health diagnosis** have **more than 3 times** as many medical service plan encounters, acute hospitalizations, and social assistance payments.

These figures go up for those clients and inmates with a **dual diagnosis** that includes substance abuse. These clients have **7 times** as many medical service plan encounters, **9 times** as many acute hospitalizations, and almost **6 times** as many social assistance payments.

HIGH FREQUENCY USERS: THE TOP 10%

Another study by Somers and colleagues, entitled *Public Services and Expenditures Among High-Frequency Offenders: Examining The Case for Coordination* focused on the cost and frequency of use of public services (such as social assistance, hospital stays, MSP billing) among offenders sentenced at least once in the Vancouver Provincial Court between 2007 and 2012. Service use by High Frequency clients (those serving the highest number of community sentence days or custody sentence days) has earned the term the **Top 10%**.

“The cost of services provided over five years to both groups [top 10% in community and custody] was \$26.5 million. This does not include other justice costs such as police, crown counsel, or courts, or health care services while in custody.”

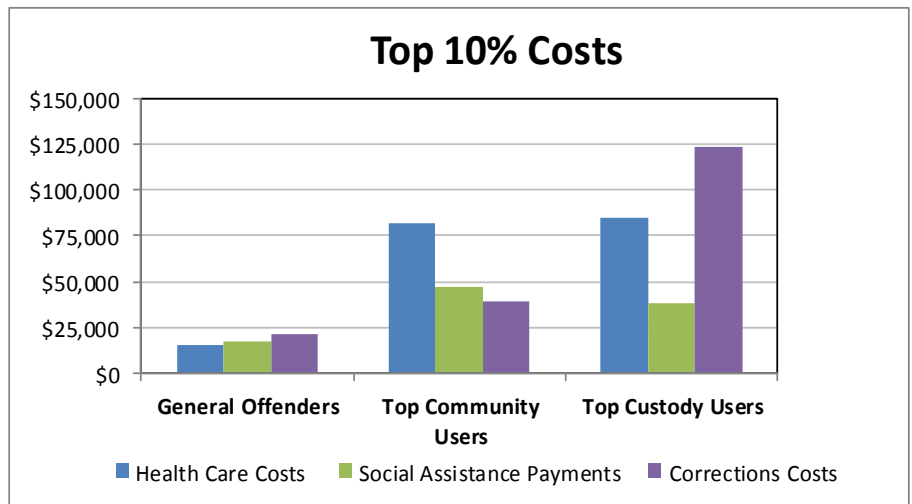
- from “Public Services and Expenditures Among High-Frequency Offenders: Examining The Case for Coordination” (2014)

Costs Associated with Top 10% Users

Over a five year period, the average **overall public service costs** (corrections, health, social assistance) *per offender* was **\$53,000**.

The average overall public service cost *per Top 10% offender* was:

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Top 10% Community | \$168,000 |
| Top 10% Custody | \$247,000 |



Corrections Costs

At the time of the study (2013), the cost of community supervision was \$6.50/day and the cost of custody supervision was \$202/day.

Translated...

Over a five year period, the average **corrections cost per offender** in the sample was **\$21,000**.

The average corrections cost *per Top 10% offender* was:

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Top 10% Community | \$ 39, 510 |
| Top 10% Custody | \$ 123, 466 |

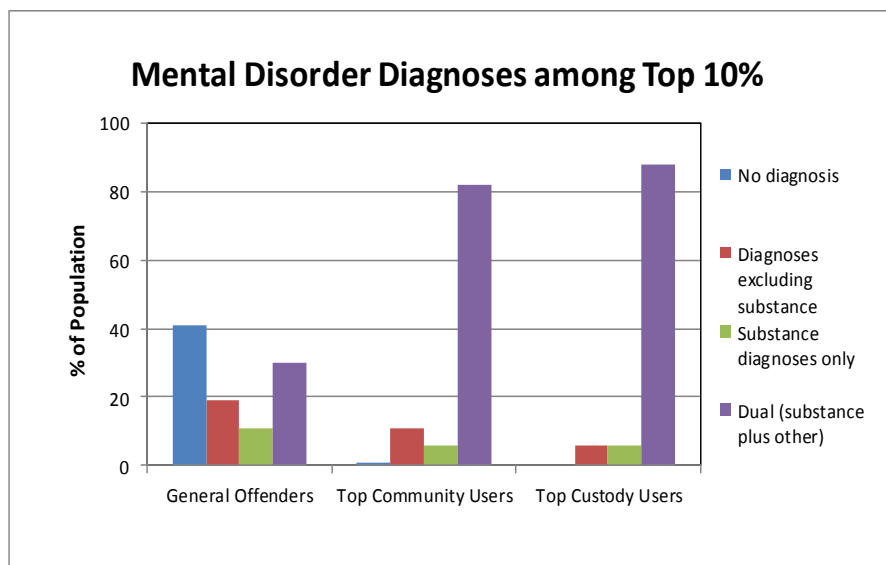
- ◆ The **Top 10% of community offenders** served a minimum of **912 days**.
- ◆ These offenders had **6.5** times more hospital days, **6.1** times greater prescription drug costs, **4** times higher physician costs, and were **2.9** times more likely to receive social assistance payments compared to general offenders.
- ◆ The **Top 10% of custody offenders** served a minimum of **325 days**.
- ◆ These offenders had **7.2** times more hospital days, **4.1** times greater prescription drug costs, **4.2** times higher physician costs, and were **2.3** times more likely to receive social assistance payments compared to general offenders.

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The Top 10% - High Frequency Users ...Continued from page 3

Who are the Top 10% Users?

- ◆ Offender samples were drawn from individuals sentenced at least once in the Vancouver Provincial Court between 2007 and 2012. The total number of offenders in the study was **14,372**.
- ◆ High frequency service use samples consisted of offenders who were in the top 10% of multiple categories of publicly funded services (MSP costs, total number of hospital days, Pharmacare costs, or Social Assistance payments). These were broken down into two groups:
 - ◆ The **Top 10% community sentenced offenders: 216 individuals** in the top 10% of days supervised on community orders
 - ◆ The **Top 10% custody sentenced offenders: 107 individuals** in the top 10% of custody days
- ◆ Interestingly, **32 individuals** were listed as **Top 10%** users in **both** the custody and community groups.



Both groups of high-frequency users were significantly more likely to have a psychiatric diagnosis than other offenders, and the vast majority of offenders in both high-frequency groups had a dual diagnosis (both substance dependence and a diagnosed mental disorder).

Joining Forces

BC Corrections is dedicated to leading and collaborating in research and evaluation.

Three provincial government ministries (**Public Safety and Solicitor General, Health, and Social Development and Social Innovation**) joined forces with Simon Fraser University to complete this research.

The Performance, Research and Evaluation (PREv) Unit

Contact us! If you have comments, questions, or ideas about this publication, please contact:

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